

Transitioning at Work Policy

This policy applies to all staff¹ employed by the John Innes Centre, both BBSRC and local terms and conditions of employment. A glossary of terms used in this policy and more generally regarding trans and gender issues is included in Appendix 1.

Introduction

The John Innes Centre (JIC) aims to create an inclusive trans-friendly workplace, where candidates, employees, students and visitors are treated with dignity and respect in the gender in which they choose to present themselves irrespective of their legal sex.

Transitioning is the process that many, but not all, trans people undergo to align their life and/or physical identity to match their gender identity. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some, it will involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning might also involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

This policy outlines the support available to employees and how the JIC will ensure any transition at work is managed in the most supportive and sensitive way possible. Other policies explaining the Institute's commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace and are available on the intranet.

Transitioning at work – first steps

An employee considering transitioning at work should arrange to meet with their line manager, supported by a member of the HR Team if they wish, to discuss how they can be supported during the transition process. Every individual's journey is different and the expectations and responsibilities of each party will be unique to each transition. Initial discussions may cover the following, which line managers may wish to use as a checklist:

- Agreeing a single point of contact who will support the individual and agree an action plan for their transition. This would normally be the line manager or another senior manager in the work area, who would liaise as necessary with other teams (for example, Human Resources, Computing, Contracts, etc)
- If known, the expected timing of the transition of gender role at work. For someone early in their transition, this may be approximate or unknown and something the individual will want to provide information on at a later date
- What time off may be required for medical appointments and any medical procedures
- Any new name and what pronouns the individual will be using. In everyday communications, any new name and pronouns should be used when the individual is ready
- What amendments will be required to identity cards, records and systems
- Whether the employee wishes to inform colleagues themselves, or would prefer this to be done for them. When agreeing how and when information will be communicated, it is important this is led by the person transitioning
- What awareness colleagues have of trans issues and whether any education may be helpful
- Use of facilities. (Once a transitioning employee presents in their affirmed gender, they would normally be expected to use the facilities of their affirmed gender but may opt to use other accessible (gender

¹ As required, students should access information, advice and support around transitioning from their university of registration. Having followed any procedures outlined by their university, as necessary, students can contact the JIC Postgraduate Research Director in confidence for additional support around any of the topics covered in this policy, including, for example, updating of Institute records.

neutral) facilities available on site. Any employee who has personal concerns regarding use of facilities should have an open discussion with the line manager or JIC's HR Manager)

- How confidentiality will be maintained, in line with the person's wishes. This should include how information regarding their transition will be managed and who will have access to it. Information should only be disclosed to those who need to know, are involved in the process or have the consent of the transitioning employee
- Additional support available to the employee (please see below).

The aim of the meeting will be to agree an action plan to support the employee during their transition at work which can be reviewed periodically as their transitioning progresses. Line managers should remember it's OK not to have all the answers – be ready to ask questions, listen, and understand the needs and concerns of the transitioning employee and seek further advice as necessary to ensure the employee is effectively supported during their transition.

Additional support

Employees and line managers can seek confidential advice from the JIC Human Resources Manager. Please see the Human Resources [Contact Us](#) page on the intranet.

Networking support is available via the Institute's LGBT+ network. Please contact Emilie Knight, LGBT+ Champion, for more information.

NBI's counsellor can provide specialist counselling related to gender identity and support is also available via NBI's Employee Assistance Programme. Please see the [Occupational Health and Counselling services](#) page of the intranet for more information, or contact Human Resources.

Occupational Health advice can also be sought in order to support an effective return to work following any medical procedures or surgery. As appropriate, an Occupational Health referral can be arranged by JIC's HR Manager.

Additionally, the following organisations offer support:

- Stonewall: a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights charity in the United Kingdom – www.stonewall.org.uk
- LGBT Foundation: information for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transvestite communities – <http://lgbt.foundation>
- The Gender Trust: supporting all those affected by gender identity issues – www.gendertrust.org.uk.

Time off

Time off for medical interventions related to transitioning should be managed and recorded in accordance with the BBSRC Sickness Absence Management Policy (for staff on BBSRC terms and conditions) or the NBI Sickness Absence Policy (for employees appointed on or after 1 October 2011). While such time off should be treated no more or less favourably than time off for illness or other medical appointments, ordinarily, it would not be expected to trigger action under the formal stages of the absence management policies.

Employees can also request a period of leave before returning to work in their new gender role. Subject to normal operational requirements, this may be accommodated using annual leave. On a case-by-case basis, managers also have discretion to authorise up to five days' additional paid leave or further unpaid leave, again, subject to operational requirements. Employees may also consider making a request under the [NBI](#) or [BBSRC Flexible Working Policies](#).

This policy is non-contractual and will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be amended and updated at any time.

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The following is a list of key words or terms that are often used when discussing trans or gender identity issues. Please note that terminology is constantly evolving and that not everyone will identify with these terms.

Affirmed Gender: The process of bringing the gender role and appearance into alignment with the gender identity, ‘affirms’ that identity. Thus, the term ‘affirmed gender’ is now becoming more common in describing the post-transition gender status.

Cisgender or Cis: someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

Gender identity: When we think of ourselves as male or female, it’s called gender identity. Everyone has a gender identity – the inborn sense of ourselves as being male or female or somewhere on the spectrum between male and female. For the majority of people, their gender identity matches their birth sex, but those who are Trans or non-binary this can feel different to their physical appearance.

Gender reassignment: People who decide to live their life in the opposite gender to the one assigned at birth could be described as reassigning their gender. Gender reassignment is another way of describing a person’s transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act of 2010. It is a term of much contention and some feel should be reviewed.

Gender role: This is the expression of the individual’s gender identity. For example, a man registered at birth as male is likely to live and act in a way that society would traditionally associate with being a man.

Queer: In the past, this was a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don’t identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.

Trans: An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to), Transgender, Gender-queer (GQ), Gender-fluid, Non-binary, Gender-variant, Genderless, Agender, Nongender, Third gender, Two-spirit, Bi-gender, Trans man, Trans woman, Trans masculine, Trans feminine, and Neutrois.

Transition: This is the process of changing gender role.

Transsexual: This was used in the past as a more medical term to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the “opposite” gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term Trans or Transgender.

Transgender man: A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to a Trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman: A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to Trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.